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ABSTRACT

A two-part effort called "The TACT Mentor Program: A Dual Introduction into College Teaching," designed to assist new faculty in their first year of teaching at Heidelberg College, Ohio, is described and evaluated. The first part of the program, TACT (Teachers and College Teaching) consisted of weekly discussions based on the book "Mastering the Techniques of Teaching" by Joseph Lowman. Over 10 weeks, 10 topics were discussed and during this time the group of 14 participants with highly diverse backgrounds developed a real sense of oneness. Results of a faculty questionnaire distributed at the first and last sessions and a general evaluation form found increased attempts to try new methods of teaching and a greater sense of belonging to an academic community among participants. All agreed that the experience was positive and that the program should continue. The second part of the program, the Mentor component, paired eight new faculty members with senior faculty from different disciplines. Each mentor was given complete freedom to operate as best fit the individual situation. Some pairings were highly profitable and others did not develop beyond the initial meeting. Future programs will contain more specific mentor requirements. The project reached out to the public in several ways: a campus forum, news releases, mailings and presentations at two conferences. Appendixes contain two faculty questionnaires, some faculty comments on the questionnaire, a 15-item bibliography and a project director's resume. (JB)

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FINAL REPORT

AWARD NO. P116B81171

"THE TACT-MENTOR PROGRAM: A DUAL INTRODUCTION INTO COLLEGE TEACHING"

SUBMITTED TO:

THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM

FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

DR. ROBERT C. MURRAY

HEIDELBERG COLLEGE

TIFFIN, OHIO 44883

HE 025 045

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Cover Sheet

Grantee Organization:

Heidelberg College
310 E. Market Street
Tiffin, Ohio 44883

Grant No.: P116B81171

Project Dates:

Starting Date: July 18, 1988
Ending Date: July 17, 1989
Number of months: 12

Project Director:

Dr. Robert C. Murray
Department of Biology
Heidelberg College
310 E. Market Street
Tiffin, Ohio 44883
Telephone: (419) 448-2043

FIPSE Program Officer: Constance Cook

Grant Award:

Year 1	$37,926
Total	$37,926

THE PROGRAM:

The Heidelberg College FIPSE effort, "The TACT-Mentor Program: A Dual Introduction Into College Teaching", began in mid-September, 1988. As stated in the Description of the Project (p.1), we developed "a two-part program." The first of these, TACT, or "Teachers and College Teaching", was built around ten Monday night sessions at the college library during the first semester. The core of the program consisted of a book by Joseph Lowman, "Mastering the Techniques of Teaching" (Jossey-Bass, 1985).

New faculty members who participated in the TACT program included Dr. Susan Carty (biology), Dr. James Chudzinski (economics), Dr. Anibal Delgado (Spanish), Karen McConnell (health and physical education), Dennis Shoemaker (health and physical education), Dr. David Towers (psychology) and Dr. Jan Younger (communication and theater arts). Joining them were eight Heidelberg faculty who had been at the school for three years or less: these included George Adams (computer science), Dr. Ken Baker (biology), John Kernan (health and physical education), Dr. Terry Lemley (physics),Dr. Russ Schultz (music), Dr. Paul Taylor (music) and Dave Weininger (math). The diverse backgrounds of the participants were extremely important in what became a delightfully cohesive group.

During our first session, we discussed the question, "What makes a 'Master Teacher'?" By building a composite of what each participant remembered as his or her best teacher, we were able to produce a list of characteristics which make for outstanding teaching. We then compared our results with Lowman's two-dimensional model which emphasizes intellectual excitement coupled with interpersonal rapport; many similarities were noted.

At this first session, we decided on a two-part strategy for working with the book. Each week, one member of the group would write an outline of the next chapter; a second volunteer would act as secretary and take notes on the meeting -- these would be distributed the following week. A sample of this work is provided in Appendix A.

One of the best things about using Lowman's book was that there were so many things to disagree with. Each program began at 7:00 P.M. and was scheduled to end at 9:00, but we never finished on time. Frequently,

the group session recommensed around10:00 at a quiet local pub. The discussions were tremendous; as project director, I can honestly say that I have not been as intellectually stimulated since coming to Heidelberg. The book served as a great springboard into a deep pool of problems, suggestions, personal plights, renewal and potential solutions. Each meeting was eagerly looked forward to; one participant told me "this is the only college activity I really care about." Attendance was excellent; no one person missed more that one meeting and apologies were always phoned in prior to the session.

The group became close, and in becoming so, developed a real sense of oneness. If someone had an academic problem, be it student or subject oriented, he or she felt free to talk about it. Nothing was sacred; everything could be discussed without fear that it would leave our group and become common campus knowledge.

For the ten weeks, the topics we covered were:

1. What makes a "master" teacher?

2. How does one assess and promote class morale?

3. What various teaching styles have been found to be most effective at Heidelberg?

4. How does one improve the mechanical aspects of classroom performance?

5. What does current research tell us about student ratings of classroom instruction?

6. What leads to effective lectures?

7. What role should discussion play in the classroom?

8. What ingredients should go into the planning of a course?

9. What do effective teachers do to stimulate learning, particularly outside the classroom?

10. What are the most effective testing and grading techniques?

Lowman was not the only author we consulted. Appendix B, "Texts for TACT Use" lists those works which were purchased with the help of grant funds. Probably more use could have been made of these texts within the group sessions, though every member of the group did at least some browsing through the selections. The college library kindly donated shelf space for the collection.

A two-page faculty questionnaire was prepared and presented to the group during the first TACT session (see Appendix C). The same form was given to the group at the final meeting. The results showed little difference on the first page (techniques of teaching) although increased attempts to try new methods was noted. On the second page, however, there was a definite increase in a feeling of "belonging" to an academic community.

A general evaluation form was also handed out during the last meeting (Appendix D). As expected, there were some variations in responses, though all agreed the experience was definitely positive (#5) and that the program should be continued (#6).

The MENTORING program began with a luncheon for those experienced faculty selected to partner the new members. During this time, the project director discussed the role of mentoring and offered suggestions and guidelines by which the mentors might operate. Flexibility was built into the program; no one right way was insisted on -- rather, each mentor could operate as best fit their duality. In selecting the mentors, an attempt was made to pair new faculty with personnel from a different subject area; our final pairings were as follows:

M. Casler (math) with Chudzinski (economics)
B. Reyer (English) with Carty (biology)
B. Fors (history) with Delgado (Spanish)
N. Siferd (American studies) with Younger (communications)
D. Noss (religion and philosophy) with Towers (psychology)
J. Miller (media center) with Shoemaker (health & physical ed.)
F. Blake (Spanish) with McConnell (health & physical ed.)

In addition, a two-year faculty member, P. Taylor (music), was paired with M. Schultz (education).

Most of the pairings proved viable. Some, for example the Siferd/Younger pair, became very close, meeting for lunch each week to discuss problems, visiting each other's classes and participating in college and community programs. A few simply did not work. If there was one failure with the mentor program, it would be the degree of flexibility granted. In the future, more specific requirements should be delegated; for example, meeting at least once each month with the project director to discuss what has or hasn't been done.

OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAM:

Based on the internal evaluations as well as numerous discussions with various participants, I can report that the outcomes delineated on pages 10-11 of the grant were clearly met. The morale of the TACT group and the general involvement of the MENTOR groups was very high.

DISSEMINATION:

The Heidelberg program reached out into the public in several ways.

1. On campus - At a special faculty luncheon hosted by the college administration, the project director and three participants discussed the program with over sixty members of the Heidelberg faculty and staff. The meeting was well received.

2. A copy of the news release issued by the college to our local newspaper is enclosed as Appendix E. Many people in the community were very interested in our approach.

3. Over forty copies of the grant were mailed out by request to individuals at other institutions who learned of our work through a variety of sources.

4. A great deal of interest was generated in both private and group sessions at the FIPSE Conference in 1988 and at a meeting of the Lilly Foundation in Indianapolis in 1989.

PROGRAM CONTINUATION:

Following the end of the first-year's program, the project director invited one of the very able "graduate" participants, James Chudzinski, to co-direct the program in the future. Because of the relatively small number of faculty hired for the 1989-1990 school year, our team and the administration decided to fund the MENTOR program each year, while running the TACT portion on alternate years. Thus, we are currently meeting during the second semester on a weekly basis with our five new members and, on occasion, their mentors. A set of problems we experienced in attempting to initiate the program during the first semester was a combination of irreconcilable schedules during the day and the fact that two of the five newcomers commute from over fifty miles away; this made night sessions impossible. Thus we waited until this semester, when a common time could be found.

Next year, these five people, in addition to those newly hired, will take part in the TACT program; only the newcomers will have mentors.

UNREACHED GOALS:

There were several sections of the grant which were not realized.

1. Our outside evaluator was unable to coordinate his schedule with our program. I should have looked elsewhere, but didn't. I suspect I was feeling so good about what took place <u>on</u> campus, I failed to strengthen our position with a new <u>off</u> campus person.

2. Logistics and lack of time made the parallel study of faculty at other colleges sit on the back burner. Thus, the comparative aspect of the program was not realized. As Heidelberg continues with its TACT-MENTOR endeavor, I hope to build up both the data here and elsewhere.

CONCLUSIONS:

In sum, I feel that the TACT-MENTOR program made a very strong contribution to the Heidelberg campus by fulfilling the goal of presenting a forum for discussion for new teachers where they could question, seek answers and learn from one another. In addition, none of the new people

experienced the same feelings of isolation within the academic community which many of us felt upon first starting our teaching careers; this was a direct result of both the TACT and MENTOR programs.

I would sincerely like to thank the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education for the opportunity to develop this worthwhile program; in particular, I would like to commend Dr. Constance Cook who helped me in so many different ways.

APPENDIX A - FACULTY LETTER & QUESTIONNAIRE

To: The Faculty

From: Bob Murray

As most of you heard President Cassell mention at the last faculty meeting, Heidelberg has made it through the preliminary selection by the United States Department of Education for a FIPSE grant. Upon consultation with the liaison in that office last week, I was told that one major strengthening point would be to show support by the faculty at Heidelberg College. I would like to briefly describe the project and solicit your comments and suggestions; **the deadline is tight, so your immediate response would be greatly appreciated.**

I have had a strong feeling over the past several years that while we do a fine job with our freshman students in TSD, we don't pay enough attention to our new faculty. Aside from a strong week-long orientation program by the dean, the freshman teachers are left largely to their own devices. A two-part program might help make the transition easier for teachers entering our system.

(1) TACT (Teachers and College Teaching):

In this ten-session program, the new faculty would meet with me and other experienced educators to discuss various aspects of college teaching. Using a very fine book (Mastering the Techniques of Teaching by Joseph Lowman) as a guide, we would cover such topics as class morale, different teaching styles, effective lectures, the role of discussion in the classroom, course planning, stimulating learning outside the classroom and effective testing testing and grading techniques. These meetings would serve as an informal forum for our young faculty to discuss with experienced colleagues both the suggested material and any problems which may have arisen in the classroom.

(2) Mentoring:

At the beginning of the school year, those of you who are interested would meet for a mentoring workshop with at least one outside speaker from an established program. You would then each be paired with a new member to serve as his/her guide through the individual's first year on campus. By observing a few of the mentee's classes (and having that person observe you); by integrating these new peers into the cultural, social and academic life of our campus and town; and, of greatest importance, by being there as a friend and advisor, you could give our new teachers a real sense of collegiality, a closeness which can sometimes be hard for a newcomer to break into. The mentor would receive a stipend for this additional time and effort.

I should point out that this program is not intended to replace the work done by departmental chairpersons. Their input is extremely valuable for all new faculty. However, it may be helpful to have a mentor from a different department to deal with more universal problems; it also can help alleviate some of the time commitments of the chairs.

The strength and uniqueness of this program lie in the two-pronged approach which gives the young faculty both a peer group in which to exchange ideas and an individual to help and support them; no other school I know uses this concept. However, it can only operate with your help. Thank you for taking your time to read this and to fill out the following page.

Please check the appropriate boxes and return to my mailbox.

Name _____ (optional) Years teaching at Heidelberg College _____

1. Do you feel that a TACT/Mentor program is worthwhile or would be useful on our campus?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments, if any:

2. Would you be willing to attend one of the TACT meetings?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments, if any:

3. Would you be willing to serve as a Mentor to a new faculty member?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Comments, if any:

4. General comments:

APPENDIX B

Some faculty comments to the questionnaire:

"I remember feeling the need for this as a newcomer 15 years ago."

"With so many campus leaders retiring, there is a real gap between the next generation of leaders and the newcomers. The gap needs to be bridged."

"I could have used it 3 years ago. -- especially as aid in dealing with problems during (rather than prior) to the first year."

"It is difficult for the new faculty to meld into our community. In addition, if the new person has had experience at another university, the chair often needs another 'voice' to reinforce important messages."

"My first year I was left completely on my own. I would have felt more secure and confident had I had this ten-session program."

"I'm excited about what you're doing!"

"This kind of faculty development is needed at Heidelberg."

"Terrific idea! You have my whole-hearted endorsement."

APPENDIX C (FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE DRAFT)

Institution_____ Department _____ Number of years teaching .....

Teaching Techniques

1. This question concerns the use of and satisfaction with each of the following teaching techniques. Please estimate the percentage of time (excluding testing) utilizing each method. On the satisfaction scale, "X" the appropriate response(1 = none, 7 = very high).

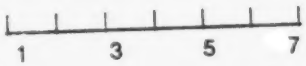
Technique	% used	Satisfaction	
a) Audiovisual	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
b) Demonstration	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
c) Discussion	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
d) Hands-on or experiential learning	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
e) Lecture	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
f) Non-test in-class writing	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
g) Small group activites	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
h) Student projects/ presentations	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:
i) Other _____ _____	☐	1 3 5 7	Comments:

(over)

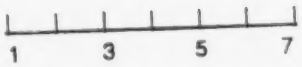
2. Please evaluate each of the following statements by marking the proper point on the scale (1 = not at all, 7 = totally or completely).

Over the past (time period):

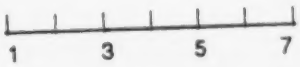
a) I was willing to take risks with my teaching (i.e.: try new techniques).



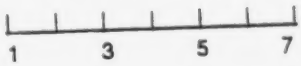
b) I was able to foster a comfortable atmosphere with students in the classroom.



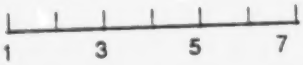
c) My tests became a part of the learning process.



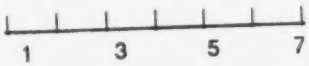
d) I felt isolated from campus activities.



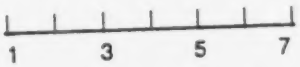
e) My tests were objective in nature.



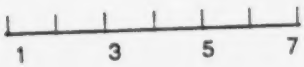
f) I have attended more than two campus/town activities(i.e.; plays, concerts, sports events).



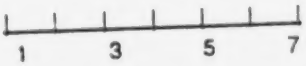
g) My tests measured more than rote learning.



h) I have met faculty in a variety of disciplines.

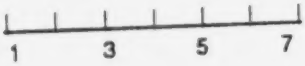


i) My test were subjective in nature.

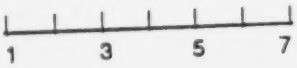


j) I was able to foster a comfortable atmosphere with students outside of the classroom.

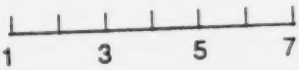
k) I felt well-integrated into campus activities.



l) I have felt myself alone when academic problems arise.



m) I have grown as a member of my college community.



You may append an extra sheet with any comments you may wish to make.

APPENDIX D

LITERATURE SAMPLE DEALING WITH COLLEGE TEACHING

I. Books About Teaching

Eble, Kenneth E. The Craft of Teaching. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass, 1984.

Eble, Kenneth E. Professors as Teachers. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass, 1972.

Ericksen, Stanford C. The Essence of Good Teaching. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1984.

Highet, Gilbert. The Art of Teaching. New York; Random House, 1954.

James, William. Talks to Teachers on Psychology:and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals. New York; W.W. Norton, 1958.

Lowman, Joseph. Mastering the Techniques of Teaching. San Francisco; Josssey-Bass, 1985.

II. Books on Evaluation of Faculty and Teaching

Braskamp, L.A., Brandenburg, D.C. and Ory, J.C. Evaluating Teaching Effectiveness: A Practical Guide. Beverly Hills; Sage, 1984.

Centra, John A. Determining Faculty Effectiveness. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass, 1979.

Seldin, Peter Successful Faculty Evaluation Programs. New York; Coventry Press, 1980.

III. Miscellaneous Books and Articles.

Franzwa, Gregg. "Socrates Never Had Days Like This." Liberal Education 70:(3) 203-208. 1984.

Morrison, Philip. "Less May be More." American Journal of Physics 32:(5) 441-457, Mr. 1976.

Perry, William A. "Different Worlds in the Same Classroom: Students' Evolution in their Vision of Knowledge and their Expectations of Teachers." On Teaching and Learning 1:1-17, 1985.

Renner, J. "Significant Physics Content and Intellectual Development - Cognitive Development as a Result of Interacting with Physics Content." American Journal of Physics 44:(3) 218-222, Mr. 1976.

Shea, Mary Ann. "Compendium of Good Teaching ideas." Boulder: University of Colorado Learning Center, 1984.

APPENDIX E -- PROJECT DIRECTOR INFORMATION

Name: Robert C. Murray

Born: Cleveland, Ohio

Date: January 12, 1940

Education:

Albion College, Albion, Michigan -- A.B. (1962)
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio -- M.Sc. (1964)
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio -- Ph.D. (1969)
Postdoctoral studies in Developmental Biology, The University of California/Davis, (1976-78)
Additional studies - University of Kansas (1969), University of Indiana (1983).

Teaching experience:

Assistant Professor of Biology -- Ohio Dominican College, Columbus -- 1965-1970

Assistant Professor of Biology -- Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio -- 1970-1977

Associate Professor of Biology -- Heidelberg College -- 1978-1986

Professor of Biology -- Heidelberg College -- 1986 +

Administrative experience:

Present Chairman, Department of Biology

Recipient of Ohio Board of Regents EESE Title II Grant -- developed an 8-week summer session for upper elementary and junior high teachers of biology and chemistry to increase their hands-on experiences in laboratory work. Very well-received by participants.

Additional information:

Twice (1983, 1986) voted "Outstanding Teacher" Award by Heidelberg College students. Consistently receives excellent ratings on student evaluations.

Three years chaired the Educational Policy Committee.

Current and past chair of Committee for Faculty Development.